

use-permission information regarding the use of the universal signature object.

69. The signing program of claim 61 wherein the universal signature object further comprises:

a universal-signature-object viewer for utilizing the universal signature object.

70. The signing program of claim 69 wherein the universal-signature-object viewer for utilizing the universal signature object comprises:

an application launching means for launching the application compatible with the file format of at least one of the versions; and

a viewer means for displaying information concerning the universal signature object.

71. The signing program of claim 61 wherein the universal signature object further comprises:

a signing program for modifying the universal signature object to include an additional digital signature.

72. The signing program of claim 61 wherein the universal-signature-object generating means further performs the step of:

in response to the universal signature object of the digital data existing:

using the signatory's private key to generate a digital signature of signature data, wherein the signature data is a function of the digital data;  
and

modifying the universal signature object to include an additional signature.

73. The signing program of claim 72 wherein the signature data is selected from the group comprising:

one of the versions of the digital data;  
the universal signature object, prior to inclusion of the digital signature;  
a hash of one of the versions of the digital data; and  
a hash of the universal signature object, prior to inclusion of the digital signature.

74. The signing program of claim 72 wherein the universal signature object further comprises:

a timestamp of the digital signature.

75. The signing program of claim 72 further comprising:

a transaction tracking means for requesting a tracking number from a transaction server.

76. The signing program of claim 75 wherein the transaction tracking means transmits the digital signature to the transaction server.

77. The signing program of claim 61 wherein the signing program is integrated with a primary application to provide digital signing capability for the files utilized by the primary application.

78. The signing program of claim 61 wherein the signing program operates within a browser application.

79. The signing program of claim 61 wherein the signing program is a standalone application.